



### HISTORIC SMITHSONIAN "CASTLE" (1855)

The 1st Smithsonian Museum, a.k.a. Castle, was a center for scientific research. A Crypt contains the remains of James Smithson, Museum benefactor.



### HISTORIC ROOMS IN THE OLD CAPITOL (1800-1857)

- Old Supreme Court was also a Law Library.
- Old Senate Chamber was also the Supreme Court Chamber.
- Statuary Hall was the Old House Chamber until Abraham Lincoln signed legislation in July 1864 to create "National Statuary Hall."
- Portions of the Speaker's & Senate Majority Leader's Offices were once combined as the Library of Congress.

# VISITOR GUIDE

*April 2023*

*Like the Capitol, where interiors have been altered to meet the needs of the nation, the city's landscape has also changed over the years. Several museums, for example, reveal a story quite different from the buildings' original intentions. When you visit, take a good look around. There's much more to the story than what meets the eye.*

## *Past and Present*

- Portrait Gallery & American Art - **Former: Patent Office (1836)**- The building now houses 2 Smithsonian art museums. Originally, it served to encourage innovation, but it was used as barracks, a hospital, and a morgue during the Civil War.
- Planet World - **Former: Franklin School (1869)**- This was the model for public schools in town and around the country. Now, it is designed as a state of the art, immersive language experience for young and old.
- Building Museum - **Former: US Pension Bureau Offices (1882)**- It was designed with wide interiors, so Civil War veterans on crutches or in wheelchairs could move about easily when applying for benefits. Because of its open spaces, it became the site for grand social functions, like Lincoln's Inaugural Ball. Today it is also known as the Children's Museum.
- Bible Museum - **Former: Produce Warehouse (1923)** - This place is huge (8-stories/430,000 sq ft)! In its day, it included refrigerated rooms for cold storage and a colossal train portal to distribute goods by rail. This museum never feels crowded and has 2 restaurants, exhibit halls, theater, and recreated villages resembling the Holy Lands.
- Anderson House - **Former: Ambassador's Residence (1907)**- Known as the "Florentine villa in the midst of American independence," the mansion was the hub of high society during the Gilded Age. Now it offers programs and tours in support of the Cincinnatus Society, established by George Washington to benefit Revolutionary war widows and orphans.

## CONTACT US

Discover the history, architecture, and life on the Hill. Please contact **Karen Schmitt** at [karen.schmitt@mail.house.gov](mailto:karen.schmitt@mail.house.gov) to schedule.

